

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A telephone system for undetected provision of an
2 auxiliary service during a telephone conversation between
3 at least two participants over a communications network,
4 comprising:

5 a handset, having an input mechanism operable by a
6 requesting participant to submit a request for an
7 auxiliary service to be provided during the conversation;
8 and

9 a service processor, adapted to receive the request
10 over the network and to provide the requested auxiliary
11 service responsive to the request, such that at least one
12 of the other participants receives substantially no
13 indication of the request.

1 2. A system according to claim 1 wherein the auxiliary
2 service is requested by pressing a button or combination
3 of buttons on the handset.

1 3. A system according to claim 1 wherein the at least
2 one of the other participants receives substantially no
3 indication of the provision of the requested auxiliary
4 service.

1 4. A system according to claim 1 wherein the at least
2 two participants comprise three participants.

1 5. A system according to claim 1 wherein the
2 communications network is selected from the group
3 consisting of a public switched telephone network (PSTN),
4 a mobile telephone network such as a cellular or a PCS

5 network, a computer network such as the Internet, and a
6 combination of such networks.

1 6. A system according to claim 1 wherein the
2 communications network comprises first and second
3 communication channels, and wherein voice signals are
4 transmitted over the first communication channel, and
5 control signals requesting the auxiliary service are
6 transmitted over the second communication channel.

1 7. A system according to claim 6 wherein use of the
2 second communication channel for transmitting control
3 signals is invoked by the requesting participant.

1 8. A system according to claim 7 wherein use of the
2 second communication channel is invoked by pressing a
3 button or combination of buttons on the handset.

1 9. A system according to claim 6 wherein the second
2 communication channel comprises a second subscriber
3 channel on an Integrated Service Digital Network (ISDN)
4 voice/data line.

1 10. A system according to claim 6 wherein the second
2 communication channel comprises the Internet.

1 11. A system according to claim 1 wherein both voice
2 signals and control signals requesting the auxiliary
3 service are transmitted over the same communication
4 channel.

1 12. A system according to claim 11 wherein the control
2 signals are encoded so as to be substantially undetectable
3 by the at least one of the other participants.

1 13. A system according to claim 12 wherein the encoded
2 control signals are inaudible to the at least one of the
3 other participants.

1 14. A system according to claim 12 wherein the control
2 signals are encoded responsive to an input by the
3 requesting participant.

1 15. A system according to claim 14 wherein the input
2 comprises pressing a button or combination of buttons on
3 the handset.

1 16. A system according to claim 12 wherein the control
2 signals are encoded so as to be routed to the service
3 processor, and removed from the communication channel
4 prior to reaching the at least one of the other
5 participants.

1 17. A system according to claim 1 wherein the requesting
2 participant is the initiator of the telephone
3 conversation.

1 18. A system according to claim 1 wherein the requesting
2 participant is the recipient of the telephone
3 conversation.

1 19. A system according to claim 1 wherein the request for
2 an auxiliary service is selected from the group consisting
3 of a request to collect at least one detail of the
4 conversation, a request to record the conversation, and a
5 request for a hidden party to listen to the conversation.

1 20. A system according to claim 19 wherein the at least
2 one detail of the conversation is selected from the group
3 consisting of a phone number of a non-requesting
4 participant, a location of a non-requesting participant, a

5 time of the conversation, a duration of the conversation,
6 and a cost of the conversation.

1 21. A system according to claim 1 wherein the handset
2 comprises a computer keyboard, and the auxiliary service
3 is requested by pressing a key or combination of keys on
4 the keyboard.

1 22. A method for providing an auxiliary service during a
2 telephone conversation between at least two participants
3 transmitted over a communications network, the method
4 comprising

5 receiving an input from a requesting participant,
6 indicating a request for an auxiliary service, during the
7 conversation;

8 transmitting the request over the network to a
9 service provider, such that at least one of the other
10 participants receives substantially no indication of the
11 request; and

12 providing the requested service to the requesting
13 participant.

1 23. A method according to claim 22 wherein the input
2 indicating a request for an auxiliary service comprises
3 pressing a button or combination of buttons on the
4 handset.

1 24. A method according to claim 22 wherein the at least
2 one of the other participants receives substantially no
3 indication of the provision of the requested auxiliary
4 service.

1 25. A method according to claim 22 wherein the at least
2 two participants comprise three participants.

1 26. A method according to claim 22 wherein the
2 communications network is selected from the group
3 consisting of a PSTN, a mobile telephone network such as a
4 cellular or a PCS network, a computer network such as the
5 Internet, and a combination of such networks.

1 27. A method according to claim 22 wherein the
2 communications network comprises first and second
3 communication channels, and wherein voice signals are
4 transmitted over the first communication channel, and
5 control signals requesting the auxiliary service are
6 transmitted over the second communication channel.

1 28. A method according to claim 27 wherein use of the
2 second communication channel for transmitting control
3 signals is invoked by the requesting participant.

1 29. A method according to claim 28 wherein use of the
2 second communication channel is invoked by pressing a
3 button or combination of buttons on the handset.

1 30. A method according to claim 27 wherein the second
2 communication channel comprises a second subscriber
3 channel on an ISDN voice/data line.

1 31. A method according to claim 27 wherein the second
2 communication channel comprises the Internet.

1 32. A method according to claim 22 wherein both voice
2 signals and control signals requesting the auxiliary
3 service are transmitted over the same communication
4 channel.

1 33. A method according to claim 32 wherein the control
2 signals are encoded so as to be substantially undetectable
3 by the at least one of the other participants.

1 34. A method according to claim 33 wherein the encoded
2 control signals are inaudible to the at least one of the
3 other participants.

1 35. A method according to claim 33 wherein the control
2 signals are encoded responsive to an input by the
3 requesting participant.

1 36. A method according to claim 35 wherein the input
2 comprises pressing a button or combination of buttons on
3 the handset.

1 37. A method according to claim 33 wherein the control
2 signals are encoded so as to be routed to the service
3 processor, and removed from the communication channel
4 prior to reaching the at least one of the other
5 participants.

1 38. A method according to claim 22 wherein the requesting
2 participant is the initiator of the telephone
3 conversation.

1 39. A method according to claim 22 wherein the requesting
2 participant is the recipient of the telephone
3 conversation.

1 40. A method according to claim 22 wherein the request
2 for an auxiliary service is selected from the group
3 consisting of a request to collect at least one detail of
4 the conversation, a request to record the conversation,
5 and a request for a hidden party to listen to the
6 conversation.

1 41. A method according to claim 40 wherein the at least
2 one detail of the conversation is selected from the group
3 consisting of a phone number of a non-requesting

4 participant, a location of a non-requesting participant,
5 the time of the conversation, a duration of the
6 conversation, and a cost of the conversation.

1 42. A method according to claim 22 wherein the handset
2 comprises a computer keyboard, and the auxiliary service
3 is requested by pressing a key or combination of keys on
4 the keyboard.

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